

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 NIC-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EA-06

SAJ-01 /087 W

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R 061916Z MAR 75

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8989

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: THE SHELEPIN AFFAIR

REF: LONDON 3237

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: OPPOSITION TO THE POSSIBLE VISIT OF
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ALEXANDER SHELEPIN CONTINUES IN THE PRESS, AMONG PARLIA-

MENTARIANS, BY PRIVATE EMIGRE AND JEWISH GROUPS, AND A CONSERVATIVE MP URGED THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER MINISTERS NOT TO WELCOME HIM IF HE COMES. THE TUC HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT IS MAINTAINING ITS INVITATION TO THE SOVIET AUCCTU TO SEND A DELEGATION NEXT MONTH, BUT SOME TUC LEADERS ARE CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SHELEPIN MIGHT IN FACT LEAD IT. AN FCO SOURCE TOLD US THAT IF SHELEPIN SEEKS TO COME, HE WOULD BE TREATED AS A TRADE UNION VISITOR. THE "TIMES," FOR ITS PART, EDITORIALY INTONES: "HE IS NOT WELCOME BUT HE SHOULD NOT BE KEPT OUT." END SUMMARY.

2. A CONSERVATIVE MP, KENNETH BAKER, CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER TO GIVE AN UNDERTAKING THAT NEITHER HE NOR ANY MINISTER WILL WELCOME SHELEPIN IF HE COMES TO BRITAIN. (HE SAID THAT SHELEPIN HAD BELONGED TO AN ORGANIZATION "WHICH SYSTEMATICALLY TORTURES AND MURDERS MANY OF ITS VICTIMS.") MR. WILSON REPLIED, "I AM AWARE OF STRONG FEELINGS ON THIS QUESTION. THESE ARE MATTERS FOR THE HOME SECRETARY (MR. ROY JENKINS) IF THE VISIT CONTINUES TO BE IN PROSPECT." AN FCO SOURCE, WITH WHOM WE TALKED, EMPHASIZED THAT IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER SHELEPIN IN FACT PLANS TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION FROM THE TUC. HOWEVER, THE FCO SOURCE SAID THAT IF SHELEPIN DECIDES TO COME HE WILL BE TREATED SIMPLY AS A TRADE UNION VISITOR AND NOT AS A LEADING GOVERNMENT FIGURE (THAT IS, AS A MEMBER OF THE SOVIET POLITBURO).

3. ALTHOUGH LEN MURRAY, TUC GENERAL SECRETARY, HAS REPORTEDLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE INVITATION STILL STANDS, SOME MEMBERS OF THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL WITH WHOM HE TALKED THIS WEEK EXPRESSED THEIR DISCOMFITURE OVER THE UPROAR THAT HAS BEEN CREATED. DAVID BASNETT, FOR EXAMPLE, SAID "HE WAS UNHAPPY WITH THE VISIT."

4. THERE HAS BEEN A CONSIDERABLE DRUM FIRE OF VIOLENT OPPOSITION TO THE POSSIBLE VISIT OF THE FORMER KGB CHIEF. THE MOST VOCIFEROUS AND CONSISTENT ATTACKS ON IT HAVE BEEN IN THE "DAILY MAIL," WHICH TODAY (MARCH 6) HAS SERIALIZED ITS RUNNING BATTLE WITH THE SOVIET LEADER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNDER THE TITLE "THE TUC AND THE KGB," CONCLUDING THAT "THE IDEA OF BROTHERLY EXCHANGE VISITS -- OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE WEST AND IN THE SOVIET UNION GETTING TOGETHER TO WORK FOR THE COMMON CAUSE IS A SHAM." KEITH WATERHOUSE IN THE "DAILY MIRROR" TODAY CALLS SHELEPIN A "GUEST OF DISHONOR" AND ASKS THE TUC GENERAL SECRETARY WHAT HE WOULD HAVE DONE "SUPPOSING THAT A DEPUTATION OF GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS WERE ARRIVING HERE NEXT MONTH AS

GUESTS OF THE CBI" AND THAT THEY WERE HEADED BY "ALBERT SPEER, THE RETIRED NAZI WAR CRIMINAL." THE ASCERBIC BERNARD LEVIN, IN THE "TIMES" TODAY BITTERLY TAKES TO TASK CLIVE JENKINS, A MEMBER OF THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL, FOR HIS DEFENSE OF THE INVITATION AND OF SHELEPIN. HE QUOTES JENKINS AS SAYING: "I BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN IS EFFECTIVELY INSPIRED BY COLD WAR FORCES, ESPECIALLY THE AMERICANS...THE ATTACKS ON MR. SHELEPIN I'D HAVE THOUGHT WERE NONSENSE...I REALLY CAN'T UNDERSTAND THIS RATHER FEBRILE AND AMATEURISH CAMPAIGN..." AND LEVIN RESPONDS, "I HAVE NEVER SUBSCRIBED TO THE OPINION THAT BECAUSE MR. CLIVE JENKINS IS A MOST EGREGIOUS ASS

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HE IS NOT DANGEROUS BUT UNTIL MONDAY I WOULD HAVE SAID
THAT IT DID NOT MATTER VERY MUCH."

5. AND THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" REPORTS TODAY THAT ABOUT 20
LABOR MPS SIGNED A COMMONS MOTION LAST NIGHT DECLARING
THAT SHELEPIN WOULD NOT BE A WELCOME GUEST IN BRITAIN.
GREVILLE JANNER, A LABOR MP, WHO SPONSORED THE MOTION
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SAID: "I AM HOPING MR. SHELEPIN WILL TAKE THE HINT AND
SAVE THE HOME SECRETARY AND THE TUC A LOT OF EMBARRASS-
MENT BY DECIDING NOT TO COME."

6. THE "TIMES," IN AN EDITORIAL "THE UNWELCOME GUEST,"
SAYS THAT "ADMITTEDLY BY SOVIET STANDARDS THE PERIOD IN
WHICH HE (SHELEPIN) SERVED WAS RELATIVELY LIBERAL" BUT
GOES ON TO CITE THE FACT THAT "HE DID PERSONALLY DECORATE
AN AGENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSASSINATING TWO UKRAINIANS IN
WEST GERMANY." IT ALSO NOTES THAT THE TUC HAD LITTLE
CHOICE IN INVITING HIM AFTER HAVING VISITED THE SOVIET
UNION IN 1973, NOR CAN IT CHOOSE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF
THE DELEGATION. "YET NO ONE OF ORDINARY FEELINGS CAN
REMAIN UNMOVED AT THE SIGHT OF BRITISH TRADE UNION
LEADERS HOBNOBBING WITH THE FORMER BOSS OF THE GREATEST
OPPRESSIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE MODERN WORLD WHO EVEN NOW
REPRESENTS A BODY WHICH HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH UNION-
ISM IN THE WESTERN SENSE..." THE EDITORIAL EMPHASIZES
THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS A DIFFERENT PROBLEM AND THAT THE
HOME SECRETARY SHOULD USE HIS POWERS OF REFUSAL "AS
SPARINGLY AS POSSIBLE." IT ALSO STATES THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT IS "COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF PURSUING NORMAL RELA-
TIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION" AND, WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF
THE ALLIANCE TO NEGOTIATE "FREER FLOW OF PEOPLE AND
INFORMATION." IN THE END, THE "TIMES" SAYS: "HE IS NOT
WELCOME BUT HE SHOULD NOT BE KEPT OUT."

7. COMMENT: NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE WHETHER SHELEPIN WILL
ACCEPT THE INVITATION OF THE TUC OR NOT. IF HE DOES,
THERE IS EXTREMELY LITTLE LIKELIHOOD HE WILL BE BARRED.
BUT THIS ENTIRE EXERCISE HAS ADDED VERY LITTLE LUSTER
TO THE TUC IMAGE, AND ONE MAY BE SURE THAT MANY TUC
LEADERS--CLIVE JENKINS ASIDE--ARE QUITE UNCOMFORTABLE
OVER THE FUROR WHICH THE "SHELEPIN AFFAIR" IS CAUSING.

RICHARDSON

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